



I promise you this, my friend, at some point this year, you will suffer. I'm not saying that to be harsh, it's just a fact of life.

Now I'm sure you'll experience joy as well, that's the nature of the rollercoaster that is the human experience. But it's easy to be grateful when life treats you well. Anyone can do that. It's much harder when your world is consumed by pain. How you handle those moments will make or break you.

Your ability to rise above pain will determine whether or not you achieve your goals and create the reality you want, this year and every year moving forward.

Of course, it is not the only factor that influences success. There are others, like building habits, getting clarity of purpose, and mastering a money mindset, to name just a few.

While there are many challenges (or opportunities if you choose to see them that way) on the journey to a life of lasting fulfillment, knowing how to smile in the face of suffering is the most important one. It is the one challenge that will influence how you deal with all the other ones. As professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, the bestselling author of *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, said, "Of all the virtues we can learn, no trait is more useful, more essential for survival, and more likely to improve the quality of life than the ability to transform adversity into an enjoyable challenge."

We do not rise to the level of the desires we want, we fall to the level of suffering we are willing to endure. That is why finding joy in adversity is the most valuable skill of all. The greater your ability to endure pain, the more you will get out of life. More in whatever category you want more, joy, money, health, relationships, epic experiences, anything.

I created this PDF to help you get through any kind of hardship, so you can create that life you have always wanted.

Ultimately, there are two kinds of pain you will face. We all will. There's the pain we seek and the pain that is forced upon us. Pursuing any worthwhile goal will be difficult, to say the least. You will encounter tremendous adversity on the path to success of any kind. That's the pain you choose. But even if you don't seek out a worthy struggle, struggle will find you anyway. I don't wish it upon anyone, but you and I both know that life can beat us down from time to time. That's the pain we are forced to face, whether we like it or not.



30 Weapons To Transform Pain Into Power

In my 40 years, I've been blessed to experience a variety of pain of all kinds, physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, financial and in relationships. Some of this pain I sought out consciously, like running ultramarathons, building a business, going into 10 days of darkness, skiing into a polar storm in Antarctica and much more. Some pain, I did not go looking for. It was thrust upon me. Pain like going through a divorce, battling PTSD, depression and alcoholism that drove me to the brink of suicide after fighting the war in Iraq, and losing many people I love.

Whatever the pain I have endured, today I'm grateful for it. It taught me more about the strength of the human spirit than I could ever have imagined. I now want to share this hard earned wisdom with you and give you all the weapons to win your war against pain. You don't have to make the mistakes I made, and you can rise back up faster than I did.

I'm going to give you many weapons inside this guide. Some of them are obvious and you've probably heard them before. That doesn't take away from their value, but they're not revolutionary. Others are highly advanced strategies that take a great deal of practice to master. Some are going to apply more for certain kinds of pain, like physical pain, and some are going to apply more for other kinds, like mental or emotional pain. Some of the weapons will be universal. Many of these weapons can be used together in the same battle. They work extremely well with each other. Some will also be the exact opposite of other ones. It doesn't mean one is wrong and the other is right. They all have their place. It just depends on what you need, when you need it.

Rest assured though, every single weapon here is either validated by years of research in neuroscience, psychology and spirituality, and/or it has been battle-tested in very intense conditions. All of them are proven. All of them work.

It's up to you to figure out which weapon is most relevant for you at any given point in time. The only way you will know is by putting this all to the test. Train in pain. That's how you become better and stronger at transcending it. Go out into the arena and practice what you are about to learn.

Here are the 30 Weapons to get you through the hard times and transform your pain into power:



1. It's not about you

This is foundational. This ethos guides me in all areas of my life, especially when I'm in pain. Remembering that my life is about something bigger than myself helps me get out of my own way and use my pain to be of service. Focus your energy on how moving through this pain will make a difference for someone else. When you transcend your pain in service of others, you no longer have the option to quit.

2. Go through a checklist of the basics

Bring your attention to the foundational, survival elements for your well being. Take care of your nutrition, hydration, sleep schedule, and physical health. Very often, just by addressing these basics, you will alleviate a great deal of your pain.

3. Never give pain a voice

You may be in pain, but don't give that pain any power. Use words in a way that alter your relationship to the pain and your experience of reality. For example, you could say "I love running," even when you don't, instead of "I hate this, my legs hurt." This is not about sugar coating the hardship, it's about choosing what parts of the experience you want to give the most power to.

4. Show gratitude

You don't "have to" endure this. Acknowledge and embrace that you "get to." Amor Fati is a latin phrase which means "love fate." No matter what fate has in store for you, love it and be grateful for it. Gratitude for my pain has gotten me through many dark times.

5. Mantras

Use mantras to redirect your consciousness, instead of letting it be consumed by the pain. I have A TON of mantras I use all the time. Mantras like "Amor Fati," or "this too shall pass," or "be with what is, but do not be consumed by what is," and many, many more. Mantras are like a guiding compass to focus your attention to something else that's more important than the pain.



6. Count the steps

Counting steps is a great way to bring yourself into the next immediate moment in front of you, instead of letting the pain you are feeling define your reality. It orients the mind to something other than the pain. Next time you're hiking and you think you can't go any further, just count 10 steps, take a deep breath, and repeat the process. You can count seconds, or count each step you need to take in other contexts as well.

7. Be 100% present

We've all heard this, and if you have any kind of spirituality practice, you know the power of being fully in the now. But it's much easier said than done. When I say, be 100% present, I do not mean the idea of presence. I mean the real, time no longer exists, kind of presence when you have not just freedom of mind, but freedom from it. This kind of presence can only be achieved with a lot of practice and training.

8. Connect to your body

Building on the previous step, bringing your focus to the body pulls you out of the mind and the stories in your head that create all unnecessary suffering. Pain is often intensified by the narrative, not the sensation itself. To reconnect with your body, focus on one of the 5 senses, use breathwork tools, like box breathing, or you can also use gentle movement like stretching. The paradox of connecting to your body is that it can both amplify the rawness of your pain and liberate you from it. Whether that pain is physical or emotional, when you embody the moment and drop into sensation, you may feel the intensity of your pain more sharply, but now it is pure sensation without the story. Some suffering may still be present, but it will have loosened its grip significantly.

9. Embrace the "is-ness"

A lot of our suffering, even when it's physical pain, comes from the dialogue inside our head, NOT the external circumstances. There is a space between the pure is-ness of an experience and the story you have around it. Accepting and embracing the is-ness will alleviate a great deal of your pain. This requires a constant and relentless practice of awareness.



10. Tap into your darkness

Your demons are not your enemy. They can be your greatest source of strength. For a long time, I had a picture of my friend that I lost in the war up on my wall and it said “This should have been you. Earn this life.” My survivors’ guilt fueled me to write my book and build my business. I transformed the dark forces that once destroyed my spirit into my most powerful allies. Engage your darkness, be with it, bring it to the surface and use it.

11. Access the light

Sometimes you need to do the exact opposite of calling forth the darkness. Sometimes you need to find the light. Go to your “happy place.” Create a visual image in your mind of the place that brings you the most joy and go there when you’re in pain.

12. “The moment”

At some point when you are deep in the pain cave, you will arrive at a place that I call “the moment.” This is the moment when you reach transcendence. It is an experience of God, whatever that means to you. You can engineer “the moment,” but the only way to know it is to experience it firsthand. It is divine. No words can describe its intensity and power.

13. You are not your mind, body, or experiences

You are the thinker of your thoughts, the feeler of your feelings, and the experiencer of your experiences. There is a space between the you that you think of as you, and the true you, that higher consciousness. When you become fully cognizant of this truth, you will immediately rise above your pain. I do this by talking out loud to myself, repeating the mantra, “I am not the mind, I am not the body.”

14. Go even deeper into the pain cave

This sounds counterintuitive and paradoxical, but when you use this weapon at the right time, it works wonders. When I ran 50 miles around a cul-de-sac all night and found myself in a great deal of pain, I didn’t wish for it to go away. Instead I asked for more of it. When your body and mind cry out in agony, smile and ask for more. I have used this method with clients for emotional pain as well. I create a container for them to explore the depths of their trauma or any emotion they may be struggling with, like anger or guilt. Only by feeling it fully can they then free themselves from the grasp of that pain, because the only way out... is through.



15. Escape the pain cave

Sometimes, you need to do the exact opposite of going deeper into the pain and do everything you can to escape it. Distract yourself from “the suck” with music, an audiobook, a podcast, whatever you need.

16. Create anchors

Anchors can be anything from a mantra to a video to a music to a person to a specific kind of structure, literally anything. They are simply tools to ground you into a particular state of being based on associations and connections you have consciously created. So you could have one song that always makes you feel good, that could be your anchor for a particular kind of pain.

17. Remember tomorrow

The lifetime of regret from quitting too early is far worse than the pain of pushing just a little bit harder that day. By remembering tomorrow, you are thinking of the consequences and the misery of future pain if you stop now. The pain you are in now is temporary. It will pass. But the pain of choosing to give up can stay with you forever. Remember tomorrow and move through the pain today.

18. Know your why

Get crystal clear on why you want the thing that is waiting for you on the other side of the “pain cave.” Know your selfish and your selfless why. It is vital to have both. Selfishness can, and must, coexist with selflessness. For example, you might be suffering through late night work so you can get that sale to take care of your kids. When you are exhausted and deep in the pain, remember the freedom you will create for yourself and the life you will give your kids. Both are your “why.”

19. You are barely scratching the surface of your max potential

Never forget that no matter how deep in the suck you find yourself, you're nowhere near the limits of your potential. Not even remotely close. I guarantee none of us have touched that edge. Human beings are capable of enduring extreme hardship at a level that most of us could never fathom. History provides many examples of this. You are stronger and more powerful than you think you are. We all are. Remember that.



20. Get support through connection and community

Ultimately, no matter what kind of pain you are in, only you can move through it. No one can do it for you. But others can be there to hold your hand and support you on the journey. Success is a team sport and nothing great ever gets accomplished alone. Reach out to friends, family, mentors, a coach, someone, anyone to get support, as and when you need it. I would not have been able to raise the \$1.1 million needed to fund my historic, solo Antarctic expedition, without the thousands of people from all over the world who contributed to the expedition fund. I also had an army of supporters like doctors, nutritionists, trainers, marketers, polar mentors, a documentary team, and so many others who made that journey a reality. Outside support makes the impossible, possible. If you would like someone in your corner, working with you through your battles, I would be honored to explore what working together one-on-one might look like for you. Feel free to reach out to me at akshay@fearvana.com if that would be of interest. Either way, whether it's me or someone else, don't try and reach the mountaintop alone, it's a futile effort. No one has ever done that in the past and no one ever will.

21. What will others think of you

You have probably heard people say that you shouldn't care what others think about you. However, the fact is, we're tribal creatures. We all care what other people think about us. We can say we don't, but we all do to some extent. There's degrees to how much we care. You obviously shouldn't live your whole life based on what other people think about you, but this does exist within our subconscious. So instead of denying it, bring it to the surface and embrace it. Imagine what your friends, family, the world, would think and say about you if you quit now. Use that as fuel.

22. You are a symbol of humanity

The effectiveness of this weapon will depend on your core belief systems, but this is especially true for me. When I do things that stretch the boundaries of the human potential, I remind myself that I'm here to be a symbol of humanity. I believe we are all one, so what kind of symbol would I be if I quit now? Every life around us is affected by us in some way, hopefully for the better. So, we are all symbols of humanity to some degree. What kind of symbol do you want to be? Think of people like Nelson Mandela, Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. etc. How can you use their spirit to move through your pain?



23. Embrace irrationality and delusion

This is an advanced weapon, but an absolutely necessary one. Your mind has shaped you into who you are today. Your current skill sets have already gotten you as far as they are going to go. You will have to develop new skills in order to reach a new goal. This version of you does not have those skills yet, therefore it cannot get to the next evolution of the self. It is trapped by its own constructs and limited perspective of reality. If you hold on to the constructs that shape your current environment and your current reality, that's where you will stay. You will never evolve. Therefore, to go to a place that this version of you does not know even exists, you have to be somewhat delusional. Rationality is based on a current sense of reality. To evolve, we want to create a new sense of reality, a better one. A healthy degree of delusion and Irrationality is absolutely essential to accomplish great feats of daring that expand the nature of human consciousness.

24. Smile, laugh and play with your pain

Adopt a mindset of play. Have fun with the fight. Enjoy your pain. Your battleground is also a playground. Bring humor, lightness and joy to the struggle. In Iraq, one of my jobs was to walk in front of our vehicles looking for bombs. It became a running joke that "Nanavati is going to get blown up today." That sounds like a dark thing to joke about, but we had to be able to laugh in the face of death in order to endure life at war.

I cannot stress enough how valuable is to have a sense of humor and to know how to laugh while you're in the midst of great hardship. Bring play to your pain, no matter how much it hurts. I assure you it's possible. A play mindset is nothing more than a choice to make whatever you are facing in front of you a game and deciding to have fun with it.

For example, while I was on a polar expedition in Antarctica, we got caught in a few very intense polar storms. There is nothing remotely fun or inherently enjoyable about going to the bathroom in a polar storm. It just sucks, there's no two ways about it :) So every time my tentmate and I had to go out into the storm to poop, we wished each other well and said Godspeed. We brought lightness and play to what was an otherwise miserable experience.

This is just one example, but a play mindset has helped guide me through a lot of hardship and pain. While you are playing with your pain, also make a conscious effort to smile. Very often, just the act of choosing to smile will help you tap into tremendous reserves of power to keep moving forward through the pain.



25. Stay Mission focused

The mission matters more than your pain does. It's as simple as that. Know your mission and focus on that outcome, above everything else, including your suffering. Bring your mind to the mission and give every ounce of your attention to getting one thing done at a time in order to accomplish that mission.

26. Leverage your belief system and your values

What are your beliefs about the world, yourself, humanity, God, everything? What are your values? Do you have those written down? Access these resources to alter your relationship to the struggle. Bring them to the surface, so you can use them as weapons to guide you through the pain.

27. Remind yourself what the best thing about pain is

There is a purity to pain. Its all consuming power creates a strange sense of aliveness. Pain is a great reminder that you're not dead yet. Feeling the pain means you are still alive. Remember that and celebrate it.

28. Get perspective on your pain

No matter how bad the pain you are in, whether you chose it or not, someone, somewhere has it much worse than you. There are people who don't even have the luxury of taking a few minutes to read a PDF like this one. Remember that. With that said, there is one very important caveat: Getting perspective on your pain does not mean rejecting your own pain. It does not mean you are not allowed to feel pain. Often when I share this method with clients, their immediate instinct is to then feel guilty for having pain because someone else has it worse. I remind them, that is not helpful. The power of perspective is not to deny your pain, but simply to help you transcend it. Even if you have an amazing life, you are still a human being and it's okay to feel the pain you feel, whatever that may be. It's normal. Accept your pain, be with it, then use the power of perspective to keep moving forward in the face of it.



29. Your entire sense of reality is a construct

This is an advanced weapon, but one of the most powerful ones. When we engage with reality, we don't engage with reality as it is, we engage with our lens of reality. That lens is shaped by our beliefs, mental models, and psychological frameworks on EVERYTHING around us. When you become aware of the constructs that shape your concept of reality, you can transcend them to create new ones, because your constructs create your pain. For example, when I train in the desert in Arizona during summer when it's 115 degrees, I never say things like "it's hot" or the pack is "heavy." Those words will shape my reality. Hot and heavy are relative. They are constructs. I've felt hot in -10 degrees on a polar icecap. Ultimately, the weather just is and the pack just is. Anything beyond that is a construct.

30. Alchemize and sanctify your suffering

You cannot tap into your awe-inspiring strength without struggle. You will never know courage without fear. You cannot unleash your true power without first drinking the elixir of pain. Suffering, adversity and struggle are the doorways to our greatness. We need those forces to awaken the legend we all have within us and to realize the limitlessness of the human spirit. The next time you find yourself deep in the depths of pain, honor that pain. Revere it. Celebrate it. When I battled constant hardships during my expedition in Antarctica, I would talk out loud and tell myself "Every bit of fatigue gives me more firepower. Every bit of struggle makes me stronger. Every moment of hell is opening the door to my own heaven." I didn't reject my pain. I alchemized it. I transmuted it. I sanctified it. I did the same thing with my emotional pain after the war. When you turn your pain into an expression of your power, suffering will no longer be a barrier on the path, it will become the most beautiful part of it.



30 Weapons To Transform Pain Into Power

There you have it. 30 mental weapons to help you get through the hard times in life and transform your pain into power. Take these weapons and go forth onto your chosen battlefield.

Pain is not easy to endure, that's the very nature of it. But it is NOT a bad thing. It is a necessary and even beautiful aspect of the human experience. It will lead you to your greatness. Use it. Embrace it. Fall in love with it. Once you master the skill of suffering with a smile, and it becomes embedded into the fabric of your being, you will be indestructible.

A life of infinite joy awaits you beyond your pain, but it's up to you to seize it. You are stronger than you think you are. I don't have to know you in person to say that with absolute certainty. I know that whatever struggles you are going through right now, you have the power within you to get through it.

These weapons will help you on the path, but you have to step into the arena, whatever your chosen arena, in order to master the use of these weapons.

If you would like someone in your corner as you walk through your own battles, someone who has been in the trenches of pain and can guide you to wield these weapons in your life, I'd be honored to explore working with you one-on-one. Together, we will transform your pain into both the heights of peak performance and the depths of inner peace. You can have both. And when you do, you awaken the true rapture of being fully alive. Every. Single. Day.

No pressure, just an open invitation if you feel called to take this journey with a guide at your side. If that would be of interest, email me at akshay@fearvana.com and we can set up a call to connect further.

Either way, whatever path you choose, keep training and keep fighting for what you want. It's yours if you are willing to endure whatever it takes to get it. I believe in you.

Train hard and suffer well.

Much love,
Your brother in arms,
Akshay